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ABSTRACT

In 1985, the Nebraska State Home Economics Education Council decided to develop curriculum using Marjorie Brown's work on critical consciousness orientation as the philosophic base for decision making. The change to this orientation was challenging and involved many difficulties. The interpretive and critical science components of the research conducted were intended to understand what it is like to examine one's orientation and teaching practices. The interpretive component had three parts: observations of three teachers; indepth interviews with these teachers, their administrators, and students; and writings of 45 teachers in the learning communities (LCs). Critical science action research was implemented through LCs. The LC process involved 33 participants in 3 LCs in 1991. In 1992, 12 teachers were selected for an additional LC; 28 of the original 33 members continued in LCs for a second year. Preliminary findings indicated the following: teachers were unable to articulate their beliefs in a clear, consistent manner; teachers generally agreed with all orientations when they completed the questionnaire, illustrating inability to differentiate between conflicting orientations; teachers had difficulty reflecting on their practice to see if it was compatible with their originally stated beliefs; and after in-depth study of the orientations, teachers were better at reflecting upon their actions and analyzing them in reference to the orientations. (Appendixes include 14 references and transparencies illustrating the LC process, study findings, and teacher comments.) (YLB)

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TRANSFORMING THE PHILOSOPHY AND TEACHING PRACTICES OF SECONDARY HOME ECONOMICS TEACHERS

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TRANSFORMING THE PHILOSOPHY AND TEACHING PRACTICES OF SECONDARY HOME ECONOMICS TEACHERS

I'd like to begin with a quote from Carr and Kemmis from their book Becoming Critical - Education, Knowledge and Action Research.

> "...educational theory must always be oriented toward transforming the ways in which teachers see themselves and their situation so that the factors frustrating their educational goals and purposes can be recognized and eliminated. Equally, it must be oriented toward transforming situations which place obstacles in the way of achieving educational goals, perpetuate ideological distortions and impede rational and critical work involved in educational situations." (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 130)

Context of the problem. Home economics educators have begun to examine differing philosophies or orientations of curriculum that drive the practice of teaching. One author (Eisner, 1985) labeled these differing orientations as:

technology
personal relevance
social reconstruction
social adaptation
cognitive processing
academic rationalism

"Orientation" was used by Eisner to mean way of thinking, philosophy, view, belief system or theoretical framework. It is this orientation or philosophy that should guide curriculum decisions made by teachers. These curriculum decisions might include the subject matter taught, the role of the teacher and student, the teaching models or strategies used, the media or materials used, evaluation procedures,and other decisions. Ideally, all of these components of curriculum would be determined by basing one's decisions on a well-thought-out philosophy or orientation. Different authors use different terms to represent the same types of orientations. For example, social reconstruction also is called critical consciousness by other authors. Personal relevance is known as self-actualizing.

The impetus for the examination of the curriculum orientations by home economics educators can be attributed to the Brown and Paolucci paper, Home Economics: A Definition (1979); and, subsequent discussions about the paper. In her 1976 paper, A conceptual scheme and decision-rules for the selection and organization of home economics curriculum content, Brown (1976) outlined differing views of curriculum that parallel Eisner's views of technology, personal relevance, and social reconstruction or critical consciousness. Her writings suggest adopting the critical consciousness and cognitive processing orientation to curriculum. The critical consciousness orientation is marked by a more conscious attention to the betterment of society, and an examination of the practical perennial problems of individuals and families. Curriculum using the critical consciousness orientation would focus on the development of social, ethical, conceptual

and reflective capabilities of individuals (Baldwin, 1990), and an examination of taken-for-granted assumptions that are inherent in family and social structures. According to Brown (1980), home economics education should seek (quote) "less to solve specific immediate problems directly than to develop the capacity of students (1) to define problems of the family in the historical-social context, and (2) to participate in enlightened and reflective solutions to those problems" (unquote) (p. 104).

The Nebraska State Home Economics Education Council better known as (SHEEC) made the decision in 1985 to develop curriculum using Brown's writings as the philosophic base used for curriculum decision making. The members of SHEEC felt this orientation was the most morally defensible choice when one considered the nature of families and the mission of home economics today (Brown, 1980; Baldwin, 1990). SHEEC members felt changing to the critical consciousness orientation would be a challenging task, but few were prepared for the difficulties involved in this change. As time passed, what were the underlying reasons for this apparent difficulty? It appeared that one of the problems was that teachers were being asked to change their philosophy or curriculum orientation and their teaching practices. In the past home economics teachers were eager for new teaching materials and ideas. This eager implementation was accomplished perhaps without thought or knowledge about whether or not it supported a particular orientation or view of curriculum and without an examination of the teacher's own view or orientation to curriculum. The changes that are being asked of Nebraska's home economics teachers today are fundamental to the critical consciousness view of curriculum. Teachers were asked to change their beliefs about curriculum without an opportunity to come to their own decisions about the rationality of this choice, and without a thorough understanding of the choices involved.

Changing one's philosophy or curriculum orientation appears to be a task of monumental proportions and one that is different from other changes previously asked of home economics teachers. Teachers need to be involved in questioning the assumptions they hold related to curriculum and involved in deciding which orientation is the most defensible. They can make better decisions based on an examined orientation or philosophy.

The research study I'm reporting today involves components from all research paradigms: empirical, interpretive and critical. For the empirical component 152 teachers were surveyed using the Curriculum Orientation Profile which was originally designed by Patrick Babin from Canada. The objectives, research questions and data related to this component will be reported at another session during this meeting.

The interpretive component included observations of 3 teachers, indepth interviews of these teachers, their administrators and students, and writings of 45 teachers in the learning communities. Data were also collected from curriculum documents, lesson plans, course descriptions, and teaching materials. Case studies are being developed about the teachers.

Critical science action research was implemented through learning communities and the activities inherent in the learning community, such as writing, critical thinking, and dialogue. Although the empirical and interpretive paradigms may be more familiar, critical

science action research is often overlooked. Critical science assumes people are capable of changing repressive forces that inhibit their development. For example, teachers may be using a particular strategy because of tradition, which in this case would be the repressive force that may inhibit their thinking about choices and in turn inhibit their development. Critique is "aimed at revealing to individuals how their beliefs and attitudes may be ideological illusions that help to preserve a social order which is alien to their collective experiences and needs ... ideological critique aims to reveal their deceptive nature and so strip them of their power". (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 139.)

The purpose of the interpretive and critical science components of this study was to understand what it is like to examine one's curriculum orientation and what it is like to make changes in one's orientation and teaching practices. This purpose was accomplished through the following objectives:

1. Identify the curriculum orientation and teaching practices of selected Nebraska teachers prior to and following their participation in learning community activities.

2. Understand the processes involved in examining one's orientation.
   a) improve the teacher's understanding of the orientations of curriculum.
   b) improve the rationality of teacher's orientation to curriculum and the resulting teaching practices.

At this time I'd like to talk about the Learning Community process which contributed to primarily the interpretive and critical science part of the study. In the first year we publicized the Learning Community idea through a session at our vocational conference and letters inviting teachers to apply were sent to the 523 teachers. More than 80 applications were received and 33 participants were selected for three learning communities, one in each area of the state. During 1991, two all day meetings were held.

Three teachers were selected from this group representing differing school sizes and grade levels taught. Observations were made of three teachers and two indepth interviews were held with the teachers and one interview with their principals and at least one student.

In 1992 applications were sought for an additional Learning Community. Twelve teachers were selected for this learning community and two all day meetings were held.

Twenty-eight of the original 33 members continued in the learning communities for a second year. Three all day meetings will be held for the second year participants.

If teachers miss the Learning Community meeting, they are sent an independent study packet which they must complete in order to keep them at the same level as the other members of their group. Although this is not the same it minimizes the impact of their absence. Every effort is made to make them feel part of the group. Pictures of the total group and of the various small groups who worked together in the meeting were taken and given to the teachers. Take home assignments are given that require the teacher to write and reflect about their learning, their teaching, or their beliefs.

A major goal for researchers who embrace a critical perspective is to help practitioners develop complex reasoning and social dialogue to foster increased rationality of the educator's everyday practice (Coomer, 1989). According to Coomer.

> "Critical research requires that the researcher become an observer and a participant in the ducational setting. The research process is a social process involving interchange among the people within a particular education setting. This includes the researcher. The researcher, together with the participants, identifies a practical problem." (p.177)

In this critical science action research process the researcher is a facilitator of communication which raises the taken-for-granted knowledge to the level of conscious examination so that rational decision making can take place. During these activities the researcher acts as a catalyst so that interaction can take place that would lead to individual self relfection and growth (Coomer, 1989).

Various strategies were used to insure internal validity:

1. Triangulation-using multiple sources of data or multiple methods to confirm emerging findings (long interviews of various people; use of questionnaire data, observations, writings and collection of data documents)

2. Member checks-taking data and interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible.

3. Repeated observations of the same phenomena.

4. Peer examination-asking colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerge.

5. The researcher's assumptions and biases are clarified.

Several strategies were used for increasing reliability including an explanation of the assumptions behind the study, triangulation of participant's perceptions and interpretations, and an audit trail.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data are currently being analyzed using the constant comparative method (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). Briefly, this process will include organizing the data by looking for concepts to describe the data. The data will then be moved into a schema using themes or categories. A third level will involve making inferences and developing theory. Hypotheses may emerge as the data are collected and analyzed.

Only a small amount of the total analysis has been completed. One case study has been completed, an additional one is in the revision stages and a third is being developed.

Findings

It would be inaccurate for me to report more than preliminary results for this study as data collection is continuing and analysis has not been completed. However, it would also be unfair for me to not share my preliminary thoughts and ideas related to the data. Remember that the results are not generalizable due to the qualitative nature of the data. However, some themes have appeared as we continue to analyze.

1. It was evident that teachers were unable to articulate their beliefs in a clear, consistent manner. It seemed equally clear that they had seldom, if ever, been given the opportunity to articulate their beliefs or reflect upon their practice.

2. Teachers generally agreed with all of the orientations when they completed the questionnaire, illustrating their inability to differentiate between conflicting orientations.

3. The three teachers who were interviewed felt their teaching practice was related mostly to the technical orientation, however, they aspired to or wanted more information about cognitive processing and critical consciousness.

4. Observations confirmed the teachers' practice reflected the technical orientation.

5. Teachers had difficulty reflecting on their practice to see if their practice was compatible with their originally stated beliefs, partially because they were unable to clearly articulate these beliefs.

6. After an indepth study of the orientations, teachers were better at reflecting upon their actions and analyzing them in reference to the orientations.

Thoughts about Change

- In the Learning Community the teachers first talked about change and what it meant to them. One teacher responds to the idea of change.

  The [meeting] opened my eyes to the fact that <u>everyone</u> seems to react to change in a similar way ... sometimes I feel so isolated I think I am the only person who has these feelings, and by meeting with the group, I see that others feel the same way.

- Two teachers compared change to the grieving process

  I took a human relations class this summer ... one of the ideas [the teacher] presented to us was that we all have comfort zones. As long as everything goes along the same way, we are comfortable. It is very difficult and risky for people to

move from one comfort zone into a new comfort zone. He said that each time a person moves from one state to the next that he/she goes through the grieving process (denial, anger, negotiation, acceptance). So whether we lock our keys in our car, are trying to learn something new, or we move 3 blocks, we go through this process. Once the change has been made, we are in a new comfort zone.

One insight I have had concerning change is that when one experiences change there is a process one experiences very similar to the grieving process. Even if the change is a positive one there can be denial, anger, blame, guilt, etc., before there is acceptance. Example: When moving to our new home I found myself feeling angry because the space in the linen closet or kitchen cupboards did not accommodate my "stuff" in the same way that it had been in our other house.

- A real irritation to one teacher was the idea of continual change.

...We try just about everything that comes along. We even pay to do it at times. Our teachers are sent to one workshop after another. The only thing is that the new "change" lasts for several years and slowly dies out...

Our high school has many teachers who are burned out on the idea of trying something new. It is due to the constant, " try this new approach; it is the best thing to come along," then a lack of support for the approach one or two years down the road. Can you tell that I am burned out on the idea of change for sake of changing!!

- Two other teachers comments about the continuing nature of change.

Change permeates all aspects of life -- political -- climate -- economics -- I could go on and on but ... the bottom line is ... change appears to be a constant, and increasing in intensity, and change causes change (a change reaction).

Change is constant and stressful. It can be planned or unexpected. Change for one person often involves change for many. Although change may be for the best, it is difficult to deal with and is time consuming.
Adolescents deal best with change if forewarned.
I prefer change over time as opposed to sudden change.

- Another teacher talks about how others adapt to change.

I think that in the past few months I have been a lot more aware of noticing how others adapt to change. I seem to be more aware of observing reactions and resistances to change ... that people all around me are going through.
I also feel like I am being more tolerant of going through changes myself, and less tolerant of people who are resisting change. I keep wondering why "they" won't give change a chance.

- Another component of the Learning Community meetings was an indepth understanding of Eisner's curriculum orientations. As the teachers reflected about their learning they wrote.

Actually I have thought about the different curriculum orientations quite a bit. I have analyzed how narrow members on our staff at school fit into the picture related to the various orientations. I also understand better how and why there are

clashes between individuals. They have different philosophies of the way "kids" learn best.

- Another teacher mirrored that response.

I did seem to try to "categorize" fellow staff members when we were together!

- Another teacher felt others should know about the orientations.

These other curriculums [orientations] need to be presented to more people -- not just Home Ec teachers. The community, teachers in other disciplines etc., should also be aware of these various orientations. Some parents may also need to be made aware of these different orientations.

- Some teachers began then, as we progressed further, to examine their own beliefs and practice.

Since last time, I have been thinking about the differences between what I <u>believe</u> about curriculum orientation and what I actually practice. I believe mostly in the cognitive process orientation, yet I teach mostly in the technical orientation. Just being aware of this made me, over the summer as I planned curriculum, re-think what I was doing.

As we work through the curriculum orientations, I am finding each definition is becoming clearer in my mind and I am beginning to think I may have the inkling of comprehension somewhere up there!
I understand what my current practice is. I now want to know how I can <u>change</u> that and become a more critically conscious teacher. What is difficult is the process of revamping the activities I do now. The ideas and help in doing this is what I now need.

- Another teacher identified constraints related to moving to a new belief.

My reflections on curriculum orientation revolve around what I believe I ought to do, but having to recognize my physical limitations of time and energy that prevent my following a critical thinking and practical reasoning mode that would be more consistent with my beliefs. After examining the scores last time, I was surprised to find that my questionnaire was as close as it was to the score given. [for all teachers] What surprises me in another way, is realizing that so many educators and administrators do not fully comprehend these orientations. I don't really think

their view of what ought to be required of students goes much beyond technical issues. They verbalize the need for critical consciousness and self-actualizing beliefs of educators but expect a very technical performance level. I guess it is up to us to "educate" them!

Another activity in the Learning Community was having the teachers examine their teaching practice in light of their beliefs. Before they had studied the orientations, they found this activity very difficult perhaps because they could not articulate their beliefs well. Their writings were not at all satisfactory. After thoroughly studying the orientations they did another writing. They reflected on one class they had taught and thought about what orientation it reflected. This is an example of how well the teachers were able to express their thinking.

The class was 7th Grade Home Economics. My goal was to teach about kitchen safety and sanitation so that the students would be able to have their first foods lab.

I started the class by using an overhead picture of a kitchen that has many safety hazards. The students have to identify what is wrong in the picture. We then go through more overheads that demonstrate safety rules. As we go through these, we discuss why it is important to follow the rules and what can happen if we don't. The students take notes on this information, especially fire safety. The last part of the lesson is a handout with lab procedures and rules on it. We read through this together and discuss it as we go.

This lesson is very technical. I acted as a manager and information giver. I informed the students of the expectations (like the lab procedures). I acted as the authority on the subject, there was no opportunity for the students to do any research or investigation on the subject. The role of the student was passive, they were to take in all the information like a sponge. I lectured; they took notes. I do not see how any other orientation fits with this particular lesson. I believe that it is technical all the way.

As I'm reflecting over this class I tend to feel guilty -- like teaching in the technical orientation is bad -- that I'm a failure because I used that orientation. But at the same time I look at my goal and I really feel that this method accomplishes that particular goal. I know that those students now have a clear idea of how to prevent burns, spreading germs, and how to put out a fire.

On my orientation profile the technical orientation score ties for second. So maybe I'm not so far from my beliefs.

Since I started teaching I've spent most of my time saying to adults -- "we're not just cooking and sewing; it's not just for girls". Now I examine one of my lessons to show that yes I'm still teaching in the technical orientation and yes it had to do with cooking!

I guess I still have some work to do to get my beliefs in line with what I'm teaching. This is a frustrating process.

The other teachers writings were very similar and they were able to analyze their class better. The four learning communities will continue at least for one or more years. At the end of the three year period teachers will again be tested, interviewed and observed. The results of this project will help to identify what it is like to examine one's orientation and to make changes in one's orientation and practice. Perhaps theory can be developed related to this process and measures can be taken to assist teachers in moving their orientation and practice to a more critically conscious approach.

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VI. PROCEDURES

This research study has components from all research paradigms:

Empirical	Interpretive	Critical Science
Curriculum Orientation Profile Questionnaire	Observation	Learning Community
	Interviews	Critical Thinking
	Writing	Writing
	Case Studies	Dialogue

"... EDUCATIONAL THEORY MUST ALWAYS BE ORIENTED TOWARD TRANSFORMING THE WAYS IN WHICH TEACHERS SEE THEMSELVES AND THEIR SITUATION SO THAT THE FACTORS FRUSTRATING THEIR EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND PURPOSES CAN BE RECOGNIZED AND ELIMINATED. EQUALLY, IT MUST BE ORIENTED TOWARD TRANSFORMING SITUATIONS WHICH PLACE OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL GOALS, PERPETUATE IDEOLOGICAL DISTORTIONS AND IMPEDE RATIONAL AND CRITICAL WORK INVOLVED IN EDUCATIONAL SITUATIONS." (CARR & KEMMIS, 1986, P. 130)

CURRICULUM ORIENTATIONS

- TECHNOLOGY
- PERSONAL RELEVANCE
- SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION
- SOCIAL ADAPTATION
- COGNITIVE PROCESSING
- ACADEMIC RATIONALISM

Empirical	Interpretive	Critical Science
Curriculum	Observation	Learning Community
Orientation	Interviews	Critical Thinking
Profile Questionnaire	Writing	Writing
	Case Studies	Dialogue

PURPOSE

To understand what it is like to examine one's curriculum orientation and what it is like to make changes in one's orientation and teaching practices.

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the curriculum orientation and teaching practices of selected Nebraska Teachers prior to and following their participation in learning community activities.
2. Understand the processes involved in examining one's orientation.
   A. Improve the teacher's understanding of the orientations of curriculum.
   B. Improve the rationality of teacher's orientation to curriculum and the resulting teaching practices.

PROCESS USED IN LEARNING COMMUNITY MEETINGS

1. Questionnaire used to identify beliefs.

2. Learn the meaning of change.

3. Reflect about change in personal/ professional lives.

4. Identify current beliefs about teaching.

5. Compare their current beliefs to their practice.

6. Participate in depth analysis of curriculum orientations (Eisner).

7. Reflect upon their practice in light of the orientations.

8. Examine how an analysis of orientations has clarified their beliefs.

9. Refine/change their beliefs after consideration of the orientations.

10. Identify ways to improve practice.

11. Move toward matching practice and beliefs.

FINDINGS

(RESULTS ARE NOT GENERALIZABLE DUE TO THE QUALITATIVE NATURE OF THE DATA)

1. IT WAS EVIDENT THAT TEACHERS WERE UNABLE TO ARTICULATE THEIR BELIEFS IN A CLEAR, CONSISTENT MANNER. IT SEEMED EQUALLY CLEAR THAT THEY HAD SELDOM, IF EVER, BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ARTICULATE THEIR BELIEFS OR REFLECT UPON THEIR PRACTICE.
2. TEACHERS GENERALLY AGREED WITH ALL OF THE ORIENTATIONS WHEN THEY COMPLETED THE QUESTIONNAIRE, ILLUSTRATING THEIR INABILITY TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN CONFLICTING ORIENTATIONS.
3. THE THREE TEACHERS WHO WERE INTERVIEWED FELT THEIR TEACHING PRACTICE WAS RELATED MOSTLY TO THE TECHNICAL ORIENTATION, HOWEVER, THEY ASPIRED TO OR WANTED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT COGNITIVE PROCESSING AND CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.
4. OBSERVATIONS CONFIRMED THE TEACHERS' PRACTICE REFLECTED THE TECHNICAL ORIENTATION.
5. TEACHERS HAD DIFFICULTY REFLECTING ON THEIR PRACTICE TO SEE IF THEIR PRACTICE WAS COMPATIBLE WITH THEIR ORIGINALLY STATED BELIEFS, PARTIALLY BECAUSE THEY WERE UNABLE TO CLEARLY ARTICULATE THESE BELIEFS.
6. AFTER AN INDEPTH STUDY OF THE ORIENTATIONS, TEACHERS WERE BETTER AT REFLECTING UPON THEIR ACTIONS AND ANALYZING THEM IN REFERENCE TO THE ORIENTATIONS.

THOUGHTS ABOUT CHANGE

THE [MEETING] OPENED MY EYES TO THE FACT THAT EVERYONE SEEMS TO REACT TO CHANGE IN A SIMILAR WAY ... SOMETIMES I FEEL SO ISOLATED I THINK I AM THE ONLY PERSON WHO HAS THESE FEELINGS, AND BY MEETING WITH THE GROUP, I SEE THAT OTHERS FEEL THE SAME WAY.

I TOOK A HUMAN RELATIONS CLASS THIS SUMMER ... ONE OF THE IDEAS [THE TEACHER] PRESENTED TO US WAS THAT WE ALL HAVE COMFORT ZONES. AS LONG AS EVERYTHING GOES ALONG THE SAME WAY, WE ARE COMFORTABLE. IT IS VERY DIFFICULT AND RISKY FOR PEOPLE TO MOVE FROM ONE COMFORT ZONE INTO A NEW COMFORT ZONE. HE SAID THAT EACH TIME A PERSON MOVES FROM ONE STATE TO THE NEXT THAT HE/SHE GOES THROUGH THE GRIEVING PROCESS (DENIAL, ANGER, NEGOTIATION, ACCEPTANCE). SO WHETHER WE LOCK OUR KEYS IN OUR CAR, ARE TRYING TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW, OR WE MOVE 3 BLOCKS, WE GO THROUGH THIS PROCESS. ONCE THE CHANGE HAS BEEN MADE, WE ARE IN A NEW COMFORT ZONE.

ONE INSIGHT I HAVE HAD CONCERNING CHANGE IS THAT WHEN ONE EXPERIENCES CHANGE THERE IS A PROCESS EXPERIENCES VERY SIMILAR TO THE GRIEVING PROCESS. EVEN IF THE CHANGE IS A POSITIVE ONE THERE CAN BE DENIAL, ANGER, BLAME, GUILT, ETC., BEFORE THERE IS ACCEPTANCE. EXAMPLE: WHEN MOVING TO OUR NEW HOME I FOUND MYSELF FEELING ANGRY BECAUSE THE SPACE IN THE LINEN CLOSET OR KITCHEN CUPBOARDS DID NOT ACCOMMODATE MY "STUFF" IN THE SAME WAY THAT IT HAD BEEN IN OUR OTHER HOUSE.

...WE TRY JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT COMES ALONG. WE EVEN PAY TO DO IT AT TIMES. OUR TEACHERS ARE SENT TO ONE WORKSHOP AFTER ANOTHER. THE ONLY THING IS THAT THE NEW "CHANGE" LASTS FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND SLOWLY DIES OUT...

OUR HIGH SCHOOL HAS MANY TEACHERS WHO ARE BURNED OUT ON THE IDEA OF TRYING SOMETHING NEW. IT IS DUE TO THE CONSTANT "TRY THIS NEW APPROACH; IT IS THE BEST THING TO COME ALONG", THEN A LACK OF SUPPORT FOR THE APPROACH ONE OR TWO YEARS DOWN THE ROAD. CAN YOU TELL THAT I AM BURNED OUT ON THE IDEA OF CHANGE FOR SAKE OF CHANGING!!

THOUGHTS ABOUT CHANGE AND ORIENTATIONS

CHANGE PERMEATES ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE -- POLITICAL -- CLIMATE -- ECONOMICS -- I COULD GO ON AND ON BUT ... THE BOTTOM LINE IS ... CHANGE APPEARS TO BE A CONSTANT, AND INCREASING IN INTENSITY, AND CHANGE CAUSES CHANGE (A CHANGE REACTION).

CHANGE IS CONSTANT AND STRESSFUL. IT CAN BE PLANNED OR UNEXPECTED. CHANGE FOR ONE PERSON OFTEN INVOLVES CHANGE FOR MANY. ALTHOUGH CHANGE MAY BE FOR THE BEST, IT IS DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH AND IS TIME CONSUMING.

ADOLESCENTS DEAL BEST WITH CHANGE IF FOREWARNED.

I PREFER CHANGE OVER TIME AS OPPOSED TO SUDDEN CHANGE.

I THINK THAT IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS I HAVE BEEN A LOT MORE AWARE OF NOTICING HOW OTHERS ADAPT TO CHANGE. I SEEM TO BE MORE AWARE OF OBSERVING REACTIONS AND RESISTANCES TO CHANGE ... THAT PEOPLE ALL AROUND ME ARE GOING THROUGH.

I ALSO FEEL LIKE I AM BEING MORE TOLERANT OF GOING THROUGH CHANGES MYSELF, AND LESS TOLERANT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE RESISTING CHANGE. I KEEP WONDERING WHY "THEY" WON'T GIVE CHANGE A CHANCE.

ACTUALLY I HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT THE DIFFERENT CURRICULUM ORIENTATIONS QUITE A BIT. I HAVE ANALYZED HOW NARROW MEMBERS ON OUR STAFF AT _____ FIT INTO THE PICTURE RELATED TO THE VARIOUS ORIENTATIONS. I ALSO UNDERSTAND BETTER HOW AND WHY THERE ARE CLASHES BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS. THEY HAVE DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHIES OF THE WAY "KIDS" LEARN BEST.

I DID SEEM TO TRY TO "CATEGORIZE" FELLOW STAFF MEMBERS WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER!

THESE OTHER CURRICULUMS [ORIENTATIONS] NEED TO BE PRESENTED TO MORE PEOPLE -- NOT JUST HOME EC TEACHERS. THE COMMUNITY, TEACHERS IN OTHER DISCIPLINES ETC., SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE OF THESE VARIOUS ORIENTATIONS. SOME PARENTS MAY ALSO NEED TO BE MADE AWARE OF THESE DIFFERENT ORIENTATIONS.

THOUGHTS ABOUT ORIENTATIONS

SINCE LAST TIME, I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WHAT I BELIEVE ABOUT CURRICULUM ORIENTATION AND WHAT I ACTUALLY PRACTICE. I BELIEVE MOSTLY IN THE COGNITIVE PROCESS ORIENTATION, YET I TEACH MOSTLY IN THE TECHNICAL ORIENTATION. JUST BEING AWARE OF THIS MADE ME, OVER THE SUMMER AS I PLANNED CURRICULUM, RE-THINK WHAT I WAS DOING.

AS WE WORK THROUGH THE CURRICULUM ORIENTATIONS I AM FINDING EACH DEFINITION IS BECOMING CLEARER IN MY MIND AND I AM BEGINNING TO THINK I MAY HAVE THE INKLING OF COMPREHENSION SOMEWHERE UP THERE!

I UNDERSTAND WHAT MY CURRENT PRACTICE IS. I NOW WANT TO KNOW HOW I CAN CHANGE THAT AND BECOME A MORE CRITICALLY CONSCIOUS TEACHER. WHAT IS DIFFICULT IS THE PROCESS OF REVAMPING THE ACTIVITIES I DO NOW. THE IDEAS AND HELP IN DOING THIS IS WHAT I NOW NEED.

MY REFLECTIONS ON CURRICULUM ORIENTATION REVOLVE AROUND WHAT I BELIEVE I OUGHT TO DO, BUT HAVING TO RECOGNIZE MY PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS OF TIME AND ENERGY THAT PREVENT MY FOLLOWING A CRITICAL THINKING AND PRACTICAL REASONING MODE THAT WOULD BE MORE CONSISTENT WITH MY BELIEFS. AFTER EXAMINING THE SCORES LAST TIME, I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THAT MY QUESTIONNAIRE WAS AS CLOSE AS IT WAS TO THE SCORE GIVEN. WHAT SURPRISES ME IN ANOTHER WAY, IS REALIZING THAT SO MANY EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS DO NOT FULLY COMPREHEND THESE ORIENTATIONS. I DON'T REALLY THINK THEIR VIEW OF WHAT OUGHT TO BE REQUIRED OF STUDENTS GOES MUCH BEYOND TECHNICAL ISSUES. THEY VERBALIZE THE NEED FOR CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-ACTUALIZING BELIEFS OF EDUCATORS BUT EXPECT A VERY TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE LEVEL. I GUESS IT IS UP TO US TO "EDUCATE" THEM!

BELIEFS AND PRACTICE

The class was 7th Grade Home Economics. My goal was to teach about kitchen safety and sanitation so that the students would be able to have their first foods lab.

I started the class by using an overhead picture of a kitchen that has many safety hazards. The students have to identify what is wrong in the picture. We then go through more overheads that demonstrate safety rules. As we go through these, we discuss why it is important to follow the rules and what can happen if we don't. The students take notes on this information, especially fire safety. The last part of the lesson is a handout with lab procedures and rules on it. We read through this together and discuss it as we go.

This lesson is very technical. I acted as a manager and information giver. I informed the students of the expectations (like the lab procedures). I acted as the authority on the subject, there was no opportunity for the students to do any research or investigation on the subject. The role of the student was passive, they were to take in all the information like a sponge. I lectured; they took notes. I do not see how any other orientation fits with this particular lesson. I believe that it is technical all the way.

As I'm reflecting over this class I tend to feel guilty -- like teaching in the technical orientation is bad -- that I'm a failure because I used that orientation. But at the same time I look at my goal and I really feel that this method accomplishes that particular goal. I know that those students now have a clear idea of how to prevent burns, spreading germs, and how to put out a fire.

On my orientation profile the technical orientation score ties for second. So maybe I'm not so far from my beliefs.

Since I started teaching I've spent most of my time saying to adults -- "we're not just cooking and sewing; it's not just for girls". Now I examine one of my lessons to show that yes I'm still teaching in the technical orientation and yes it had to do with cooking!

I guess I still have some work to do to get my beliefs in line with what I'm teaching. This is a frustrating process.